DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 155 812 95 EA 010 692

AUTHOR Radcliffe, Shirley, Ed.
TITLE The Condition of Education. 1978 Edition. Program and Plans, Fiscal Year 1978 and 1979.
INSTITUTION National Center for Education Statistics (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO NCES-78-406
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 25p.; For related documents, see EA 010 691, ED 136 442 and ED 147 926
AVAILABLE FROM Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (Stock No. 017-080-01822-5; $6.25 for set of 2 documents including "The Condition of Education, Statistical Report," EA 010 691)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Agency Role; *Federal Programs; Program Costs; *Program Descriptions; *Program Guides; *School Statistics
IDENTIFIERS *National Center for Education Statistics

ABSTRACT

This report provides an overview of the major program activities for fiscal year 1978 and 1979 of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). It is intended to give readers a clear idea of the structure and functions of NCES and does not present any actual statistical data. The first section summarizes the center's purpose and objectives. The next sections describe the core of statistical data from institutions and students that provide cross-sectional and trend information needed to address policy issues and to report on the status of American education. The final section describes the Center's statistical services. These services include assistance to states to improve their data systems, analysis to transform data into information for policy use, and dissemination to make timely information available to many groups of users. The appendix lists estimated costs for fiscal years 1978 and 1979. (Author/MLF)

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The Condition of Education

1978 Edition

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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ED155812

Program and Plans,
National Center for Education Statistics
Fiscal Year 1978 and 1979

by
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NCES 78-406

EA 010 692

National Center for Education Statistics

"The purpose of the Center shall be to collect and disseminate statistics and other data related to education in the United States and in other nations. The Center shall . . . collect, collate, and from time to time, report full and complete statistics on the conditions of education in the United States; conduct and publish reports on specialized analyses of the meaning and significance of such statistics; . . . and review and report on education activities in foreign countries."—Section 406 (b) of the General Education Provisions Act, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1221e-1).

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Washington, D.C. 20402
Stock No. 017-080-01822-5

Foreword

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary Federal agency responsible for collecting, analyzing, and reporting education statistics for planners and policymakers at all levels of government. The Center also coordinates the data acquisition activities in the Education Division and the Office for Civil Rights to eliminate excessive detail and unnecessary or redundant information requests.

This publication provides an overview of the major program activities for fiscal years 1978 and 1979 that are designed to fulfill NCES goals. It summarizes the Center's purpose, objectives, and program of education statistics. The report also describes the services the Center provides to ensure the collection of accurate and uniform information, the interpretation of the meaning and significance of that information, and the timely reporting of the information in forms most appropriate to the users.

Part One of this report contains a statistical report on the condition of education in the United States.

We hope that this report will be helpful to the reader in understanding the information and services available in the National Center for Education Statistics.

Marie D. Eldridge
Administrator, National Center
for Education Statistics

Acknowledgements

Part Two of *The Condition of Education, 1978,* was prepared in the Planning Office of the National Center for Education Statistics, under the supervision of Iris Garfield, Planning Officer.

Typing of the manuscript was done by Chas. Barry Groves.

Numerous individuals within NCES provided data and reviewed drafts of the manuscript; of particular help were reviews by Marjorie O. Chandler, Francis V. Corrigan, Mary A. Golladay, Robert D. North, David B. Orr, Shirley A. Steele, Joseph G. Teresa, and Rolf M. Wulfsberg.

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NCES Purpose, Objectives, and Current Strategies

Purpose

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary Federal agency responsible for collecting and reporting statistics on the condition of American education, analyzing their meaning and significance, and assisting State and local education agencies to improve and automate their statistical systems. The Education Amendments of 1976 also assigned the Center responsibility for:

- coordinating data acquisition activities of the Education Division and the Office for Civil Rights in order to eliminate excessive detail and unnecessary or redundant information requests,

- developing, implementing and operating a national vocational education data system (VEDS), and

- conducting a continuing survey of the supply and demand for education personnel.

NCES Objectives

NCES has two major objectives in the areas of education statistics and statistical services. These derive directly from the legislative authority in section 406(a) of the General Education Provisions Act:

Education Statistics—To develop and maintain a core of education statistics on both institutions and students for monitoring trends in education and for providing information to address policy issues. Such issues include: problems of declining enrollments; need for education personnel in specialized areas; financing of elementary-secondary and postsecondary education; access to and persistence in postsecondary education (including minorities in higher education); relationship of education and work; and growth or decline in achievement, especially in the basic skills.

Statistical Services—To develop a coordinated program of statistical services to users that will ensure the utility and use of these education statistics. These services include assistance to States in developing comparable data bases, analysis which clarifies the meaning of data for policy use, and dissemination of timely and useful information to the public.

Current Strategies—Overview

In order to achieve these objectives, the Center has developed a strategy to carry out a balanced program combining collection of education statistics and provision of statistical services to users.

In fiscal year 1978 the Education Statistics program will emphasize extending the range of data available on institutions and students. The Center's institutional data systems in elementary-secondary education and vocation education will be expanded and refined with the installation of the first phases of the Common Core of Data (CCD) in elementary-secondary education and of the Vocational Education Data System (VEDS). The Center will reassess the Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS) to improve the coordination between Federal and State data needs and collections. Coverage of nonpublic schools will be included in the survey of school library media centers for the first time.

Student data will also be enlarged with the addition of a new cohort to the National Longitudinal Study (NLS) in 1980. The new cohort provides the capability to compare three high school classes, 1972, 1980, and 1982, and to compare graduates with dropouts.

Statistical Services will increase to provide financial assistance to help States develop compatible data systems and to install CCD and VEDS. The Center's program of analytical studies will focus on analyses of new and existing data bases and on methodological studies. A unified dissemination program is being developed to make data more accessible and more closely related to user needs. A major component of the dissemination program is the streamlining of data production to reduce the time between data collection and reporting.

Associated with the development of NCES' program strategies is the overriding concern to reduce paperwork problems in elementary-secondary and postsecondary education. Through the Education Data Acquisition Council, NCES conducts formal reviews of present and proposed data acquisition activities in order to eliminate excessive detail and unnecessary or redundant information requests. In addition, NCES is designing a data item indexing system to identify redundancies. The computer-based index will permit quick checks for duplication of data items in survey forms and enable requestors to identify data from other sources where they may already exist.

The primary objective of the Center's Education Statistics program is to design and maintain a core of statistical data from institutions and students which will provide cross-sectional and trend information needed to address policy issues and to report on the status of American education. These data provide basic information used by Federal policymakers for assessing the impact of various programs, analyzing the condition of schools and institutions, determining disparities in financing education, monitoring the compliance of educational institutions with Federal laws, and crosswalking educational attainment with employment and other experiences in adult life.

It is important that the development of the data core be sufficiently fixed to permit trend analysis and flexible enough to address emerging issues, comprehensive in that it includes all education levels and specific target groups, and timely to ensure greatest utility and minimum burden on respondents.

The Education Statistics program provides information on elementary-secondary and postsecondary education as well as the major resources which facilitate learning. Data are collected from education institutions and agencies on enrollments, staff, and finances; from students on participation in, and the impact of, education programs; and from libraries and educational broadcasting stations on staffing, finances, and services.

While NCES maintains this data core through an ongoing program of surveys and special studies, NCES also has the capability for rapid data collection and dissemination. By means of the Fast Response Survey System, the Center provides nationally representative data in approximately 3 months on new policy-related issues.

Institutional surveys of elementary-secondary and postsecondary education and libraries, which provide the basic information necessary for establishing trends and describing the status of education, are described in the section which follows.

Institutional Data

Common Core of Data (CCD)

The Common Core of Data is a cooperative Federal-State data system designed to provide comprehensive data on enrollments, staff, finances, and facilities of public elementary and secondary schools. State agencies, through the Council of Chief State School Officers, have agreed to produce the State and local data required by CCD. Eventually replacing the Elementary-Secondary General Information System (ELSEGIS), which provides State-aggregated data, CCD will collect aggregate data for each local school system from the State education agencies. Full installation of CCD will require several years because States must adapt their record systems to standard terminology and definitions contained in NCES handbooks. Financial assistance is provided to State education agencies to reimburse them for the costs of compiling and reporting these data.

CCD represents a comprehensive effort to improve the scope, quality, and timeliness of information on the Nation's educational system. It will provide data on 16,000 local education agencies, making possible comparisons among school districts within a State or among those with similar characteristics among States. These data are vital for measuring disparities among local agencies in raising revenues for school support, for making accurate enrollment projections to guide allocation of Federal resources, and for conducting a wide variety of analytical studies to monitor the condition of education.

The data base design and field test for CCD were completed in 1977. During 1977–78 local education agency data on enrollments by grade and on staffing by assignment are being collected, and States are supplying reports on State education agency operations. In 1980 States will begin phasing in the financial component of CCD, with full implementation expected for fiscal year 1981. Until that time, school finance data will continue to be collected by State totals and from school districts through the Census of Governments conducted by the Bureau of the Census. The latter, while providing useful data, does not provide the array of finance data currently needed for policy decisions. With CCD, the required school finance data will be collected for all school systems and aggregated at the State level.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:

- Collect a portion of the CCD system for all public elementary and secondary schools in the form of local educational agency aggregates supplied by State agencies.
- Collect State education agency (SEA) data on operations, including revenues, expenditures, and staffs of SEAs.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:

- Implement the 1978–79 CCD, which begins the process of assimilating ELSEGIS (described below) into the overall CCD system.

Elementary-Secondary General Information System (ELSEGIS)

Up to the present time, the several parts of ELSEGIS have been the primary instruments for collecting basic data on public elementary and secondary education in the United States and outlying areas. ELSEGIS will eventually be replaced by CCD; for the next year at least it will overlap CCD to permit verification of the accuracy of CCD data and to allow some States more time to install the new system. ELSEGIS acquires data aggregated at the State level on pupils, staff, finances, and facilities in public elementary and secondary schools. Data are obtained through contracts with State education agencies (SEAs) which actually carry out the data acquisition, editing, and compilation for the NCES survey. These contracts are intended to reimburse the States for the incremental costs of tabulating and compiling the data into NCES formats. Data are obtained from the State agencies primarily in State-aggregated form. Statistics collected by the Bureau of the Census and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission are also used in the ELSEGIS data base.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:

- Collect SEA-aggregated statistics on the number of school districts, schools, pupils, revenues, expenditures, and staff employed during the 1977–78 school year.
- Publish reports on similar 1976–77 data.
- Continue to work on a 20-year trend study based on the fall statistics of public schools.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:

- Begin phasing ELSEGIS into CCD.
- Collect data on the 1978–79 school year and publish reports on the 1977–78 data.

School Finance Survey

The annual survey of local education agencies is conducted jointly by NCES and the Governments Division of the Bureau of the Census. It provides data on receipts by source (including the distribution of Federal funds by major programs), and on expenditures by purpose. Data are collected from school districts by the Bureau of the Census on a report form developed jointly by the two agencies. Usually, data are collected from a sample of approximately 6,100 local public school systems; however, a complete census is being taken for the Census of Governments for fiscal year 1977. The Common Core of Data will replace this survey in the 1980's.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:

- Collect fiscal year 1977 finance data for all school districts.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:

- Collect fiscal year 1978 finance data from a sample of school districts.

Nonpublic School Survey

The Office of Education, NCES, and the private sector have periodically cooperated in surveys of nonpublic schools, most recently in 1970. However, until NCES began to collect consistent and recurring data on nonpublic schools for the school year 1976–77, there had been no systematic Federal schedule of surveys in this important area of the elementary-secondary school system, estimated at 10 percent of the total enrollment. NCES plans to collect data on enrollment, staff, and finances annually in nonpublic schools to complement the common core of elementary-secondary data (CCD). The nonpublic school survey and CCD will provide complete elementary-secondary school data to help planners and policymakers to monitor trends, particularly on the population shifts between public and nonpublic schools; to estimate the number of nonpublic students who are eligible to participate in federally funded services and programs; and to make more accurate enrollment projections.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:

- Complete the report on the nonpublic school base year survey (1976–77) and administer the 1977–78 survey.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:

- Administer the 1978–79 survey and complete the 1977–78 report.

Survey of Secondary School Courses and Enrollments

Surveys of course offerings and enrollments in public secondary schools have historically served a useful role in educational policymaking. Since releasing the initial report in 1890, the Office of Education has at irregular intervals conducted a number of such surveys, the most recent being for the 1972–73 school year. These surveys have provided detailed data on secondary level courses and the number of students enrolled in them. Current data on courses and numbers of students enrolled are in demand because schools have redefined, modified, expanded, and eliminated many courses during the past decade in an effort to make them more compatible with student needs and more relevant to current economic and societal conditions.

During 1978 and 1979 NCES will design a national sample survey of secondary schools and students in grades 7 through 10 to document course content both in public and nonpublic schools. The survey to be administered in 1980 will cover all curriculum areas. Data will be related to the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of enrollees, the degree of emphasis on basic life skills, and the extent of elective versus required course offerings.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:

- Determine specifications for the design of a longitudinal study of secondary school courses and enrollments.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:

- Initiate the first phase of the comprehensive national survey.

Educational Personnel

The training, work situations, and job markets for teachers are all undergoing changes. The Education Amendments of 1976 mandate NCES to conduct recurring surveys on the supply of and demand for educational personnel, and to report annually to the Congress on areas of need. In 1978 and 1979 NCES will conduct a series of studies which focus on key components of the supply and demand for teachers and administrators.

Surveys of Supply of Education Personnel—In 1975 NCES surveyed teacher training institutions to obtain data on the number of prospective teachers. A study will be administered in fall 1978 to obtain information from institutions of higher education on the number of individuals who have completed a program in teaching or school administration between July 1, 1977 and June 30, 1978, and an estimate of those who will complete a program between July 1, 1978 and June 30, 1979. Information on the number of graduates added to the teacher supply is obtained on a biennial basis through the Center's survey of recent college graduates. Data are collected from a representative sample of recent college graduates who received a bachelor's or master's degree the preceding year to determine the employment and education status of these graduates. Among the data provided are the number of graduates who received teaching positions by field. Surveys of the 1976–77 and 1978–79 graduates will be the second and third, thus enabling planners to monitor teacher supply over the past 6 years. These data will also address the demand component by indicating the fields in which newly qualified teachers obtained employment.

Surveys of Demand for Educational Personnel—NCES is also conducting several studies which provide important information on the demand for teachers and administrators. In fiscal year 1978 NCES surveyed school districts through the Center's Fast Response Survey System (FRSS) to identify teacher shortages (the number of position openings for which qualified teachers could not be found), the demand for new school administrators, and the fields for which the demand for teachers and administrators will grow within the next 5 years. NCES plans to keep this information current. A second and more comprehensive survey of school districts will be made in 1979 to update and expand the data on teacher shortages and the future demand for teachers and administrators.

Another study is being considered in which a sample of teachers and administrators will be surveyed to collect information not available from other sources on the number of teachers hired from the teacher reserve pool, the number who have been certified in a new field and who are teaching in that field (retraining), the number who have changed their teaching location, and the number certified and employed as school administrators.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:

- Administer the FRSS survey to determine current teacher and administrator demand.
- Develop a survey of institutions of higher education on the number of prospective teachers and administrators.
- Administer the survey of 1976–77 college graduates, which includes data on the number certified to teach and the number actually employed as teachers.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:

- Design the survey of 1978–79 college graduates for administration in fiscal year 1980.
- Update and expand the information obtained from the FRSS survey to determine teacher/administ shortages and emerging demand.

- Administer a survey of employed teachers and administrators to determine numbers hired from the reserve pool, numbers retrained for other assignments, and mobility (tentative).
- Complete the statistical reports of the surveys conducted in 1978.

Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS)

Since 1966, HEGIS, the Center's collegiate data collection system, has brought into a single, coordinated package all the institution-based surveys for entire academic years. The system, which includes a complete census of public and private institutions of higher education, provides basic data on a regular schedule for responding to current issues and for comparing and projecting trends. The data are used by planners, analysts, and researchers in Federal and State agencies, higher education associations, policy and research agencies, and institutions of higher education.

Office for Civil Rights (OCR) compliance data on student enrollment and degrees earned in institutions of higher education were incorporated into the HEGIS system for the first time in 1976. This eliminates duplicate data collection and increases the depth and utility of the HEGIS data base for analysts and planners.

The following HEGIS surveys are administered annually: institutional characteristics, opening fall enrollment, degrees and other awards, employees' salaries and tenure, and revenues and expenditures. Data needed by OCR are incorporated into the enrollment and degree surveys every other year, one year for enrollment and the next for degrees. The data on adult/continuing education and academic libraries also alternate with each other. Surveys of institutional facilities are scheduled over longer periods. A feasibility study of higher education facilities placing particular emphasis on accessibility for the handicapped will be made in the fall of 1978, with the full-scale survey planned for 1979 or 1980.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:

- Prepare reports for surveys administered in fiscal year 1977.
- Administer HEGIS surveys and survey of adult and continuing education.
- Conduct feasibility study of higher education facilities, with particular emphasis on accessibility for the handicapped.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:

- Prepare reports for surveys administered in fiscal year 1978.
- Administer HEGIS surveys in the fiscal year 1979 cycle.
- Conduct full-scale study of higher education facilities.

Vocational Education

The vocational education data collection program includes the new Vocational Education Data System (VEDS), which was mandated by P.L. 94–482, and the biennial survey of noncollegiate postsecondary schools with occupational programs.

Vocational Education Data System (VEDS)—Work on VEDS began in fiscal year 1977 with the development of standard terminology and identification of items that would provide the legislatively required information: student enrollment, programs, program completers and leavers, staff, facilities, and expenditures in all public secondary and postsecondary schools. This work, completed in fiscal year 1977, was followed by design of a field test being conducted in fiscal year 1978. The system will be compatible as much as possible with State occupational information systems which will yield data on employment. Thus, used together, the two systems contribute to a continuous assessment of occupational supply and demand.

VEDS comprises two major functional elements: (1) a reporting system to enable data aggregated at the State level to be transmitted to the Federal level, and (2) an accounting system which establishes recordkeeping standards at the local and State levels. The VEDS reporting system is designed to supersede the one currently administered by the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education (BOAE) in the U.S. Office of Education.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:
- Complete the VEDS field test in nine States.
- Design manuals and conduct training sessions for the implementation of VEDS.
- Install the components of the accounting system needed for fiscal year 1979 data collection.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:
- Collect and verify State-aggregated data on participants and programs and initiate student/employer followup activities.

Survey of Postsecondary Schools with Occupational Programs—In recent years, increasing attention has been given to noncollegiate postsecondary schools. The career training provided by these institutions is recognized as an important national asset and the production of skilled workers by these schools is important in determining labor supply-demand ratios. Early in the 1970's NCES began a series of surveys to learn more about these schools, their occupational programs, and their students. Approximately 9,000 public and private schools with occupational programs are surveyed every other year to obtain information on selected characteristics. The data, together with the HEGIS data on 2-year colleges with occupational programs, establish a basic universe of postsecondary institutions with occupational programs from which samples may be drawn for special studies. A sample of approximately one-fourth of the schools receives a longer form requesting more detail on programs, enrollments, completions, and staff for the preceding 12 months. National estimates are developed from these data which help to provide information on personnel supply to meet national manpower needs, to determine eligibility for Federal and other programs, and to assist planners and policymakers by providing information on the noncollegiate sector of postsecondary education. The survey and HEGIS data on 2-year institutions supply the information for the *Directory of Postsecondary Schools With Occupational Programs.* The sample survey furnishes the data for a descriptive report on the characteristics of noncollegiate postsecondary schools.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:
- Administer the 1977–78 survey.
- Publish the descriptive report of 1975–76 data on noncollegiate postsecondary schools.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:
- Publish the *Directory of Postsecondary Schools With Occupational Programs, 1977–78.*
- Prepare the 1977–78 report describing the characteristics of noncollegiate postsecondary schools.

Learning Resources

NCES provides data on resources designed to facilitate learning. These include national data on all types of libraries (college and university, public, school, and special) and on educational broadcasting programs. The data are used by Federal and State planners, professional associations, publishers, media and microfilm producers, and school and institutional administrators.

Library General Information Survey (LIBGIS)—The Federal Government has collected data on libraries for nearly 110 years. In 1966 NCES, through the American Library Association, developed a core vocabulary of standard terminology and definitions for libraries which NCES is updating and expanding in 1977 and 1978. In the early 1970's NCES negotiated with State agencies to collect and report data to meet the needs of planners and policymakers for all types of libraries. The outcome in 1974 was a unified data collection program known as LIBGIS, designed to acquire data over a 5–6 year period on staff, collections and holdings, services, cooperative interlibrary arrangements, facilities, and expenditures for the various types of libraries. These inventories for the most part have been completed and will be periodically updated. In 1978 the survey of public school libraries will be updated to determine how extensively the library-media center concept has been adopted; in 1979 the survey will be administered for the first time to nonpublic schools. Starting in 1979, the college and university survey will also be conducted on a biennial cycle.

In 1978 and 1979 a study will expand the library data base to include standardized terms and definitions regarding programs, personnel, and users of the library, and the use of technology such as computers and data bases. Surveys will be made to obtain information on public library services, including nontraditional media such as educational film, art, music, and lecture programs, and on selected characteristics of those who use the services. A survey will also be made of staff qualifications and future personnel needs, both professional and paraprofessional, to provide more precise information for estimating library budgets at all levels of government, and for estimating enrollment in the 500 graduate and undergraduate information science programs.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:

- Complete the study of automated and computerized library networks, an organizational mode to facilitate services among libraries for efficient processing, storage, and dissemination of the mass of print and nonprint materials presently available.
- Complete the studies of Federal and State libraries.
- Administer the study of public school library media centers.
- Administer a feasibility study for a first-time survey of public library services and the demographic characteristics of those who use the services.
- Update terminology and definitions common to all types of libraries.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:

- Administer the first-time survey of nonpublic school library media centers.
- Administer the full-scale study of public library users and services.
- Complete the library terminology and definitions project.
- Administer a survey of personnel needs in the different types of libraries.
- Administer the biennial survey of libraries in colleges and universities as part of the HEGIS and LIBGIS systems.

Education Broadcasting: Public Television, Radio, and Other Media—Since 1970, NCES and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) have cosponsored a data collection program pertaining to public television and radio. In 1977 NCES and CPB cosponsored a study on the availability and utilization of television (public, commercial, closed-circuit, etc.) and other technology in elementary and secondary schools and on administrator and teacher attitudes toward these technologies. Preliminary results available from the 1976–1977 survey indicate that 15 million elementary and secondary students regularly received instruction from some 727,000 teachers who used instructional television (ITV), defined as any in-school use of television for instructional purposes. These results, which indicate widespread use and enthusiasm for ITV, suggest the value of monitoring trends in this area. Results of the ITV utilization study will be used by CPB and the Office of Education to assist in the planning, administration, and implementation of educational television programs. Comparisons of selected questions from the 1977 data with questions from a prior study conducted in 1970 will be made.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:
- Report results of ITV utilization survey.
- Conduct study of superintendent, principal, and teacher attitudes towards use of ITV.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:
- Conduct a feasibility study to convert the ITV utilization survey into a recurrent survey.

Student Data

NCES collects data on student characteristics and performance through special studies in response to persistent Federal concerns about educational services and student needs, student performance, and transition from school to work. Studies include longitudinal surveys which follow a single group of students over a period of time, and recurrent surveys which study a representative national sample of students on a regularly scheduled basis. Projects which will collect data on students in fiscal years 1978 and 1979 are described below.

School Enrollment of Children
Aged 3 to 5 Years
NCES is monitoring the increasing preprimary enrollment in the United States through the Bureau of the Census current population survey (CPS). The data provide the basis for regional and national estimates of preprimary enrollment related to a number of socioeconomic factors: age and race of child, geographic region, metropolitan or other area, public or private school, family income, and occupation and education of household head.

In recent years increasing emphasis has been placed on introducing children to formal education before age 6. The data from 1964 through 1975 have shown increased participation in preprimary education, even though the population of children aged 3 to 5 years has declined somewhat since the late 1960's.

National Longitudinal Study (NLS)
The NLS provides continuously updated, national data on the education, job training, and vocational histories of nationally representative samples of young people. It reports on the extent to which career plans and aspirations persist and are eventually fulfilled; personal characteristics of those choosing various kinds of postsecondary education and occupations; impact of Federal funds on educational participation and attainment; and the extent to which educational experiences prepare youth for work.

The study began in the spring of 1972 with a survey of high school seniors in the class of 1972. A student questionnaire, a battery of verbal and nonverbal aptitude tests, a school questionnaire, a counselor questionnaire, and school records furnished data on a nationally representative panel of seniors from a sample of 1,200 public and nonpublic secondary schools. Representatives from educational organizations and the social sciences and many Federal users of the data contributed to the project design.

In the fall of 1973, a followup survey of the participants in the 1972 sample obtained information on their post-high school educational and work activities. Second and third followup surveys were made in the fall of 1974 and 1976, and a fourth followup survey is planned for the fall of 1979.

NCES is completing plans for the addition of two new cohorts to the NLS—1980 sophomores and 1980 seniors. These new cohorts will provide the first complete opportunity to follow participants in the Basic Education Opportunity Grants program, to acquire data on high school dropouts and how they fare in life, and to examine the high school process in relation to postsecondary attainment and career choice.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:

- Prepare instruments for a field test of the fourth followup survey of the class of 1972.
- Complete the survey design and the instruments to be used in the field test of the base year survey for the two cohorts to be added to NLS in 1980.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:

- Pretest the instruments for the fourth followup of the class of 1972 and the base year survey of the new study. Both surveys will be administered in fiscal year 1980.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

NAEP is the only national data base on the educational attainments of young Americans which provides a comprehensive and systematic measure of student performance in various subject and skill areas. Initiated in 1969, NAEP assesses knowledge and skills of students ages 9, 13, 17, and of young adults (aged 26 to 35) in some years. The project focuses on two main questions: (1) What is the educational attainment in the major school subjects of various population groups in the United States? (2) What are the changes, if any, in attainment over time in these subjects? NAEP has produced evidence of unequal achievement among various student groups for different geographical regions in the United States and for different time periods.

Analyses report changes in performance over time by racial/ethnic group and sex, and by factors such as geographic region, size and type of community, and level of parental education. Information about knowledge, understandings, skills, and attitudes in the areas of science, citizenship/social studies, mathematics, reading, writing, literature, art/music, and special probes such as career and occupational development, consumer skills, and basic life skills are currently available.

NAEP results have been widely reported and have increased public awareness about student performance and the outcomes of education. Thirty-two States and a number of local education agencies are using the materials, procedures, and findings from the project to conduct their own assessments. The data are also utilized by national teachers' associations for considerations of curriculum and teaching improvements in mathematics, English, and social studies.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:
- Administer the second assessment of mathematics for ages 9, 13, and 17.
- Administer the first assessment of consumer skills for age 17.
- Complete reports on the third assessment of science for all four age groups and the first assessment of basic life skills for age 17.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:
- Analyze data acquired from the assessments conducted in fiscal year 1978 and continue present assessment schedule.

Characteristics of Students in Noncollegiate Postsecondary Schools

NCES conducted a study of students enrolled in noncollegiate postsecondary schools for the first time in 1977 to determine their perceptions of occupational training experiences. These data are collected biennially because of the importance in providing the education community and public with up-to-date information on occupational programs and in providing business and industry with trend data on the kinds of training provided for various occupations. The second survey will be made in 1979. As in the first survey, schools will be sampled to provide representation by type of school and program offered. From this sample a national representative sample of students will be drawn.

Student profiles are derived from data on student and parental educational background, sex/racial/ethnic group, military status, work experience, past and current occupational training experiences, reasons for selecting the program, and career plans.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:
- Design survey and instruments for study of characteristics of students enrolled in noncollegiate postsecondary schools in 1978–79.
- Publish report on students enrolled in noncollegiate postsecondary schools in 1976–77.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:
- Administer the 1978–79 survey.

Participation in Adult Education

Through the Bureau of the Census current population survey, administered triennially since 1969, NCES monitors and reports on adult participation in education during the preceding 12 months. Data are collected on the types of activities in which adults participated, reasons for participating, degree of satisfaction with the activities, and basic demographic data such as educational and occupational background, sex/age/racial/ethnic group, and veteran status.

In 1975 over 17 million adults who were not full-time students in high school or college participated in adult education as opposed to 13 million in 1969, an increase of over 30 percent.

Fiscal Year 1978 Activities:
- Contract with the Census Bureau to collect data through the May supplement of the current population survey.

Fiscal Year 1979 Plans:
- Prepare the report of the 1978 survey.

The Center's statistical services are designed to provide accurate and timely data in forms appropriate to users' needs. These services include assistance to States to improve their data systems, analysis to transform data into information for policy use, and dissemination to make timely information available to many groups of users.

Assistance

The assistance program is designed to develop comparable statistical systems which meet the needs for education planning and management at Federal, State, and local levels. The assistance program is organized around activities to achieve two objectives: (1) the development and implementation of Federal-State-local data cores, and (2) the development and improvement of State data systems. The specific projects in the program result from a cooperative planning effort which NCES engages in with the States. The Federal-State planning effort and activities under each objective follow.

Federal-State Coordination and Planning

NCES works closely with States in cooperative activities designed to define information needs, develop data standards, and achieve greater consistency in those data requirements where there are overlapping Federal-State interests. An important planning objective is to reduce burden, redundancy, and excessively detailed reporting at the State and local levels in providing data to meet Federal requirements.

At the elementary-secondary level, Federal data collection plans are reviewed and short- and long-range priorities for State assistance activities are developed cooperatively by NCES and the Council of Chief State School Officers' Committee on Evaluation and Information Systems (CEIS). CEIS not only reviews all survey instruments in advance of their going into the field but also informs the States of the data required by the Education Division in administering federally legislated programs. In fiscal year 1976, NCES established a postsecondary network with one representative from each State to foster Federal-State cooperation and planning in the area of data collection. By means of a contract with the State Higher Education Executive Officers Organization (SHEEO), the SHEEO/NCES Communication Network provides a single mechanism for communication, coordination, and cooperation between NCES and the States.

With the expansion of postsecondary education in the 1960's, there has been a recognition of the need for improved information systems to support planning and managment. NCES is making a major effort to address this need by coordinating State and Federal data collection systems through the development of a Federal postsecondary data core, and by supporting development of a State core, known as the State Level Information Base (SLIB). SLIB was inititated in 1975 by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), with support of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, to provide data for making decisions about postsecondary education at the State level. In 1977, NCES contracted with NCHEMS to extend the SLIB effort to the development of a Federal postsecondary core. During fiscal year 1978 the proposed core will be revised to take account of recommendations from the SHEEO/NCES Network, the Federal Advisory Committee on State Statistics, and numerous institutions and institutional associations. During fiscal year 1979, general training sessions on the Federal data core and SLIB will be available to all the States.

Federal-State-Local Data Cores

The development of Federal-State-local data cores requires the use of standard definitions and terminology as well as specifically planned activities which will ensure that data systems are implemented as designed. Currently, the major data systems efforts are installing the elementary-secondary common core of data (CCD) and the National Vocational Education Data System (VEDS).

The NCES handbooks and manuals of standard definitions and terminology have long provided the means to achieve comparable data among State and local education agencies and institutions. Developed in cooperation with educational organizations and agencies, the handbooks and manuals contribute both to the improvement of State and local data systems and to the uniformity of statistical reporting. Recently, in the elementary-secondary area, the handbook effort has been extended to include the training of State education agency personnel in recordkeeping and fiscal accounting procedures. In fiscal year 1978 the financial accounting manuals which provide the classification and procedures essential to record and report data for the finance module of CCD are being updated. Small awards to States to assist in the development of financial record systems which support CCD data collection will be continued. In addition the revised property accounting handbook is being distributed and the handbook on community information in education is being completed.

In fiscal year 1979, training in the application of handbooks to State and local record systems will be extended to the areas of property, student, and staff accounting.

In fiscal year 1978, at the postsecondary and adult education level, the handbook of terminology for adult-continuing education will be completed, and work will begin on the instructional program taxonomy. These activities upon completion will provide some of the basic structure needed for a common core of data spanning vocational, postsecondary, and adult education.

During fiscal years 1978 and 1979, NCES will continue the staged process to install various components of CCD and will take major steps to launch VEDS. Development of State capabilities to collect and report CCD and VEDS data require the development of materials and training programs for State personnel to acquire the skills necessary for collecting, processing, and maintaining accurate and precise data. In fiscal year 1978 the VEDS field test in nine States will be completed, manuals designed, and training sessions conducted prior to beginning recordkeeping in fiscal year 1979 and full implementation and collection in fiscal year 1980. In fiscal year 1979 assistance will be provided to States to develop and maintain the capacity to supply sub-State (labor-market area) data on vocational education. It is anticipated that half the States will participate in fiscal year 1979.

In fiscal year 1978, the CCD was launched with State reporting of local education agency enrollments by grade, and staffing by assignment. In fiscal year 1979 States will begin phasing in the financial component of CCD, with full implementation expected for fiscal year 1981. Resources are provided to the States to produce the data required for the elementary-secondary common core.

State Data Systems

NCES fosters the development of State data systems through a number of activities including conducting an annual seminar which provides training to improve data production and utilization, sharing technical expertise among States through a personnel exchange, and funding a modest program of grants to support State capacity building. The State capacity building program, inaugurated in fiscal year 1978, is designed to accelerate the development of compatible State statistical systems by providing States with funds to automate and upgrade their statistical systems. States will be given the opportunity to propose projects critical to the improvement of their systems. The kinds of projects which States may elect to propose include installation of forms management procedures, redesign of forms to facilitate computer maintenance of records, specifications for a computer based record system, installation of a data acquisition plan for local agency reporting, and development of data collection, editing, and reporting modules.

In addition, other activities include helping States to plan, develop, and conduct assessment programs modeled after the National Assessment of Educational Progress; support in fiscal year 1979 to a limited number of States to install teacher supply/demand information systems; and support in fiscal years 1978 and 1979 for installation of collective bargaining information systems in selected States using a model developed in fiscal year 1977.

Analysis

Analytical studies clarify the meaning and significance of statistics for those who need information to make policy decisions. Such studies enable more accurate assessment of change, provide insights into the significance of data, and describe more fully the education enterprise and its participants by incorporating demographic, social, and economic data. The NCES analysis program is directed toward examining data from NCES and non-NCES sources to prepare reports on trends and critical issues, and on developing and utilizing new applications of statistical methodology to increase and extend data usefulness.

Descriptive and Trend Studies

Special analyses which are being conducted in fiscal years 1978 and 1979 will provide information with respect to educational needs, equal opportunity, financial equity, quality, and future career paths. In elementary-secondary education, analyses are being conducted of the: (1) status of language minorities with respect to their educational attainment, degree of English proficiency, level of income, and employment status; (2) supply and qualifications of education personnel available to work with language minorities in public schools; (3) degree of success of federally-funded education programs in meeting the need for qualified teachers and school administrators, particularly for language minorities, economically and academically disadvantaged, handicapped, and in vocational and adult basic education; (4) enrollment/dropout status and labor force participation of high school students; (5) mobility rates among students of different socioeconomic characteristics in elementary-secondary schools in 1970 and 1977; (6) revenues and expenditures of large city school systems compared to those of their respective States; and (7) levels of large city revenues and expenditures by selected demographic characteristics.

In the area of postsecondary education, analyses are being conducted of the: (1) social and economic factors which influence participation of target groups (handicapped, language minorities, older adults, ethnic/racial minorities, women, and the economically disadvantaged) in postsecondary education; (2) benefits of a college education in terms of income, types of jobs, and stability of employment for target group members; (3) characteristics of traditionally black institutions and of predominantly black institutions, including enrollment, degrees awarded, faculty, libraries, and financial status; (4) characteristics of higher education institutions according to the proportion of students who are black; (5) financial condition of colleges and universities according to their size, type, control, and geographic location; and (6) distinguishing characteristics of institutions of higher education which are experiencing declining enrollments.

A series of studies drawing on the educational, vocational, and personal development of the high school class of 1972 will provide information on: (1) how high school experience effects postsecondary activities, (2) the relationship between vocational training and occupational attainment, (3) access to and persistence in postsecondary education for minority and disadvantaged young people, (4) the availability of student financial aid and how students "package" this aid to pay for their education, (5) the impact of prior educational and occupational experiences upon career development and the ability of young people to acquire and maintain satisfactory employment, (6) factors leading to the fulfillment of educational and career plans, and (7) the development of life goals, social attitudes, and participation in community activities.

Analyses of data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress will include changes in science performance over three assessments, changes in mathematics performance between two assessments, and reports on the performance of 17 year-olds in consumer and basic life skills.

Methodological Studies

Methodological studies assist the Center in advancing the accuracy, comparability, and coverage of the data acquired in its surveys and in providing analytical measures and indicators used for deriving the meaning and significance of education data. Major activities in 1978 and 1979 are described in the following section.

Statistical Analysis Group in Education (SAGE)—Established in 1976 to explore problems in survey methodology, SAGE will continue to develop and apply social indicators in the field of education and stucture data bases for greater analytical utility.

Thus far SAGE has produced:

- A prototype cost-of-education index for elementary-secondary education which is a measure of costs and need independent of school district wealth and willingness or ability to pay for education services. Correlations have been computed between the index and selected socioeconomic variables such as proportion minorities, elementary school enrollment, percent Federal revenues, and teacher-pupil ratios.
- A study of the tradeoffs between costs and precision for sampling nonrespondents in longitudinal studies.
- A report describing several indicators for measuring the benefits of education.
- A user's manual for the NCES' elementary-secondary education data files on staffing, pupils, and finance.
- During the next 2 years SAGE will study and report on the following:
- Techniques for making reliable estimates from partial data to hasten the reporting of selected important data items.
- Specifications and procedures for establishing reliability and validity in recurring NCES surveys.
- Indicators to measure the financial health of colleges and universities.

SAGE will also continue to structure and merge NCES data with other data bases to expand the Center's analytical capabilities.

Census Data by School District—The geographical boundaries for each of the approximately 12,000 school districts in the United States, which have enrollments of 300 or more, have been updated to 1974 on NCES' School District Geographic Reference Computer Tape. The Tape aggregates, to the school district level, social and economic data from the 1970 Census of Population and Housing, which were collected on a different geographic base.

The project makes possible subcounty allocations for ESEA Title I funds and provides the basis for correlating census with school district data. Thus population and economic data are available to school district planners and administrators to accommodate changes in kindergarten and first-grade enrollment and population shifts, and to plan for school facilities and staff, dropout prevention, and school desegregation.

In 1979, the Center will begin remapping all of the approximately 16,000 school districts in preparation for the 1980 Census.

Other Studies—NCES is conducting a study of youth unemployment and education in industrial nations to develop indicators that may provide insight about conditions in the United States. This will be completed in 1978.

In 1979 projects will be initiated: to develop indicators of life-long learning in the United States and other industrial nations; to assess international education needs, trends, and critical problems; and to develop a handbook for cross-referencing and establishing comparability between the United States system of educational classification and the UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education.

Dissemination

NCES disseminates information to users in many forms. A wide variety of reports are available in printed form. Data are also distributed on microfiche and computer tape and through special tabulations. An information and reference service answers approximately 13,000 inquiries per year from legislators, government agencies, business and other organizations, education institutions, and private citizens. A remote access system provides users with statistical data from terminals located in many parts of the United States. More than 60 data bases from NCES, Office for Civil Rights, Bureau of Postsecondary Education, and the Bureau of the Census are available through this remote access system. NCES also directs the Federal interagency consortium of users of education statistics, composed of representatives from more than 30 Federal agencies and Congressional staffs. The purpose of the consortium is to incorporate high-demand data tapes in a centralized library and make them available through the remote access system.

During 1978 emphasis is being placed on improving existing operations and on developing major components of a unified dissemination program to provide more timely information. Recent changes in the formats of the Center's products, the production process, and methods of distribution have reduced costs and have increased user access to more up-to-date information. Such changes include: (1) substantial increases in the number of early data releases, bulletins which describe highlights of selected survey results, and computer tapes from surveys and studies, (2) reduction of nonanalytic summary tabular reports, (3) cancellation of several publications with detailed data by institution and provision of these detailed institutional data through microfiche, (4) limited distribution of complimentary copies of publications and revised mailing lists tailored to user needs, and (5) streamlining of the production process for all of these products to reduce the time lag between data collection and reporting. A significant modification of the production process is the centralization of all of the data processing activities which, over the long term, will accelerate availability of computer tapes and microfiche products, facilitate an increase in in-house analyses, and expand the capability of the remote on-line access system by making data available in graphic as well as tabular form.

During 1979 NCES will augment and further integrate the dissemination activities with particular emphasis on: (1) streamlining the information service to respond more quickly to statistical queries, (2) expanding the reference service to provide brief specialized analyses requested by Federal and Congressional users; (3) examining the impact of current changes, especially the reduction in nonanalytic tabular reports, (4) documenting computer tapes to permit use by the general public, and (5) producing special user tapes that integrate data from several surveys.

NCES Activities:
Estimated Costs for Fiscal Years 1978 and 1979

Budget line items	1978 Appropriation	1979 Estimate
Education Statistics	$7,237,000	$8,716,000
Statistical Services	6,703,000	7,224,000
Assistance	2,816,000	4,056,000
Analysis	2,759,000	2,162,000
Dissemination	1,128,000	1,006,000
Total	**13,940,000**	**15,940,000**

* U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1978 O - 252-906